

TLA / GPA

12th May 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Sexual violence and sexual harassment (peer-on-peer abuse)

In the wake of recent media coverage surrounding peer-on-peer abuse in schools and colleges, I write to assure you of our commitment to affording our students a secure and welcoming environment at Alec Hunter in which to learn and grow. The Department for Education has requested that Ofsted conduct a review of sexual abuse in educational settings and whilst the review will focus on schools where cases have been reported, it is possible that it will seek to establish whether other schools have appropriate processes in place to assure students that any concerns they report will be addressed in a timely and appropriate manner. NSPCC's dedicated helpline for people who have experienced sexual harassment or abuse in education is, without doubt, a positive step to make sure all schools are protecting and supporting their most vulnerable students.

I wanted to take this opportunity to remind you of our own practices and policies at Alec Hunter regarding reporting incidents where a child is at risk, including sexual harassment, sexual violence and abuse. Students can speak to our Safeguarding Team (Mr Booth as Designated Safeguarding Lead or Mrs Watson as Deputy Safeguarding Lead) or they may choose to report concerns to their Head of Year or Student Support Leader. All our Student Support Leaders have undertaken Level 3 safeguarding training to ensure that they are equipped with the skills to support our students. In the event that a student does not feel comfortable talking to any of the aforementioned staff members, they can pass on information or share their experiences with any member of staff they choose, since colleagues in all roles within the school receive annual safeguarding training at Level 2 and are aware of how to approach and report a disclosure.

The next steps we take as a school are to meet with the young person to explore the disclosure, then contact parents/carers to update them on the information that has been shared and to discuss what support might be most appropriate for the young person. In addition, we may choose to engage other professionals, make a referral to Social Services for support or liaise with relevant agencies, such as the Police or CARA (the Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse).

I should like to add that our revised RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) curriculum, taught principally through Learning for Life lessons, promotes the development of important attributes of relationships, such as respect, honesty, kindness, tolerance and courtesy. Crucial issues, including personal privacy, boundaries and consent, are required to be taught explicitly so that more young people have a greater understanding of how to behave suitably towards their peers. We are fully committed to the delivery of this curriculum.

If parents are concerned about a possible safeguarding risk of any kind, including those involving sexual harassment, violence or abuse, please call the school and request to speak to Mr Booth by letting the office know you have a safeguarding concern or email ABooth@alechunter.com. Advice and support will be provided for next steps to make sure the young person is kept safe.

Finally, I would direct all our parents to the Emotional Wellbeing tab on our school website, the 'Safeguarding Info for Parents' resources found under the 'Parents' tab, also on our school website, and recommend visiting our official school Facebook Page, where online safety messages and details of current trends affecting young people's online behaviours are regularly communicated.

I hope you find all of the above useful. We hold no higher ideal than that our students should feel safe and happy if they are to fulfil their potential, and we regard as very serious any compromise to this principle and to the values upon which the school is founded. Hence, we encourage them to report any concern to us and we assure you that they will receive our full support.

Yours sincerely,



Mr T. Lawn
Headteacher